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ABSTRACT

This document is a report of the Children's Express Symposium III, a forum for journalists on children's issues. Included in the report are the comments of news media executives, journalists, broadcasters, experts on children's issues, directors of children's programs, and young people affected by the policies and practices discussed. Opening remarks by Omri Elisha, Beverly Kees, and Jonathan Kozol are followed by a section focusing on newspapers. After a discussion of the Kentucky Post's Year of the Child, two newspaper editors address the process of voicing children's concerns in the newspaper. The second section, Children in Crisis, covers the following topics: teen pregnancy; street kids and AIDS; fetal alcohol and drug syndrome; educational inequities; gay teens; institutional child abuse; and child mortality in the United States. The third section offers a dialogue about solutions. Discussed are the qualities of a good program; the process of rethinking program goals; new approaches to education; parent and community involvement in educational programs; program funding; and the role of business. Concluding the document are lists of participants, information on the Children's Express news service, and other related materials. (SH)

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The Media & Children's Issues

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Children's Express Symposium III

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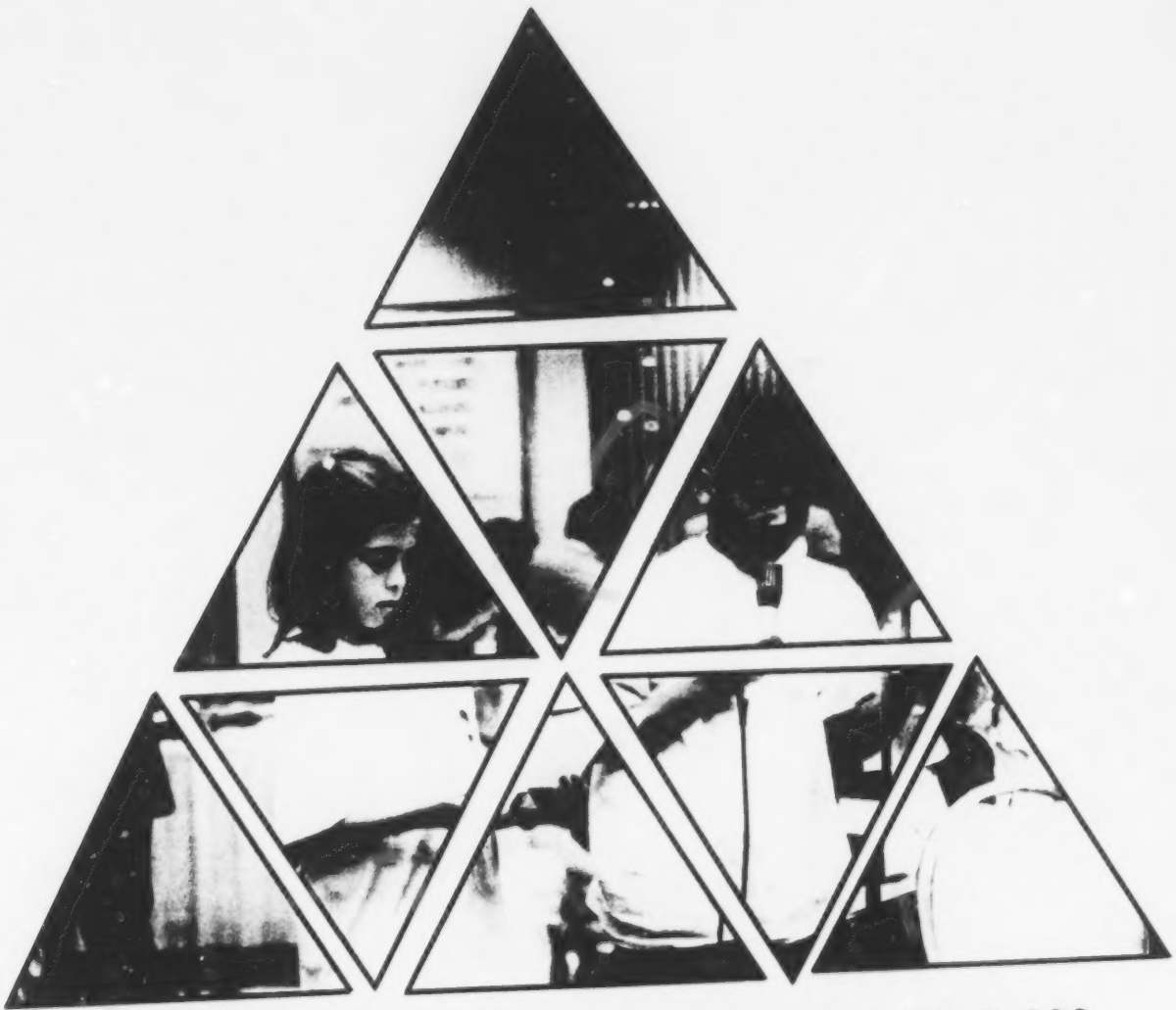
"Your Symposium last week was marvelous...you consistently find the most expert people in their field who bring a profound depth to their remarks; coupled with the intensity of their feelings, the presentations are sometimes overwhelming...my fondest wish is that more news people would realize the invaluable resource you provide at these conferences; I walked away with at least 50 story ideas, along with source contacts few can equal...I felt those two days were among the most thrilling I have spent in a long while; interestingly, while the message was depressing, it was inspirational to find people who have good ideas how to resolve these terrible problems we all face."

—John V.R. Bull, Assistant to the Executive Editor, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

"I consider it (Children's Express) the highlight of this last year at The Star. We are reaching out to an audience that we weren't reaching in the way I think we should have been. We're stimulating an interest in reading and in journalism to boot. I consider the addition of Children's Express one of the best things that's happened since I've been City Editor, and even contributing to its presence in Indianapolis in a small way makes me proud."

—Dennis Royalty, City Editor, *The Indianapolis Star*



CHILDREN'S EXPRESS SYMPOSIUM III
JUNE 11-12, 1990

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June 11-12, 1990, New York Hilton, New York City

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Peter Jennings, Anchor & Senior Editor, ABC World News Tonight
Beverly Kees, Executive Editor, The Fresno Bee
David Lawrence, Jr., Publisher & Chairman, The Miami Herald
Bill Moyers, Executive Editor, Public Affairs TV

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Children's Express Symposium I: The Media and Children's Issues was held November 25-26, 1985, The New York Hilton, New York

OPENING REMARKS

OMRI ELISHA, 17, Children's Express Senior Editor;
BEVERLY KEES, Executive Editor, *The Fresno Bee;*
JONATHAN KOZOL, Lecturer and Author, *Rachel and Her Children, The Night Is Dark and I Am Far From Home*

The tenth decade of the 20th century promises to be the most difficult. At every level there are circumstances and problems which threaten the viability of our society and the future of its children. For example, the proportion of children born with fetal alcohol syndrome, drug addiction and AIDS will be at an all time high. It is also likely that there will be higher percentages of retardation and physical illness.

A very large proportion of children will be born into low-income families. Many children will be born into a single-parent situation or soon become the victims of divorce, separation or abandonment. Reported child abuse is at an all time high along with spousal abuse. Parental neglect and parental inadequacy are rampant.

Among older children and teenagers today, use of drugs and alcohol, teen pregnancy, child and adolescent mental illness, hunger, poverty and homelessness are all commonplace. Along with soaring school dropout rates, there is widespread unemployment and attendant alienation among young people from a wide variety of backgrounds.

All of these things are happening in an era of curtailed public spending. That is coupled with a decline in the financial ability of low and lower middle income families (the so-called 'working poor') to provide services needed by their children.

The irony of these developments is that they are occurring at a time when we have more scientific knowledge about the growth and development of children than at any point in the past. Countless commissions, committees and study groups have examined too many cases. Their recommendations, after a brief flurry of public attention, are cast aside and soon forgotten.

The news media is the only real link between children who are being undereducated, underdeveloped, abused and neglected, on one hand, and the general public, politicians and policy makers, on the other. Children's Express Symposia on The Media and Children's Issues are the only ongoing dialogues among news media executives, journalists, broadcasters, experts on children's issues and the young people whose lives are affected by the policies and practices under discussion.

WELCOME

OMRI ELISHA

Children's Express articles deal with many stories, facts and issues that affect the world and us—the world's children—today and for the future. It is because of the importance of these issues that Children's Express, with its young members, has worked so hard in the struggle to give kids a voice in the adult world and has done so through one of society's strongest forces—the media. On a personal level, after nine years of working with Children's Express (CE), I have seen many changes take place in the world around me and I have grown to understand these changes much better.

However, I also know that there are many problems that are still unsolved, many questions that are still unanswered, many issues that have still gone unrecognized, and many stories that have still gone untold. Therefore, aside from its purpose as an information gathering service, CE is also an organization with a hand in shaping the world. Giving children a voice in the adult world is one thing, but there is also work to be done in making sure that there are people out there to listen and to act. Among them are other journalists. Closing the gaps between what the world needs to know about children's issues and what it is able to find out is a major part of CE's goals.

Throughout its 15-year history, CE has maintained a respectful yet distant relationship with the rest of the journalism world. In our world today, the need for open dialogue between those who represent the inquiries of all people and those who represent the interests of children is greater than ever before. Symposium III on The Media and Children's Issues, a forum for such comparing of notes and ideas between journalists young and old, could not come at a better time, or with its goals in sharper focus.

WHY COVER KIDS?

BEVERLY KEES

Household penetration figures for daily newspapers have gone down steadily since World War II. We can blame that partly on television, because we at newspapers love to blame everything on television, but I think that the more important reason is that readers no longer see the newspaper as theirs.

When the paper carries out its role as public watchdog, readers feel like the paper belongs to them, looks out for them, represents them. That doesn't mean merely uncovering scandal. It also means helping the community identify its problems, find solutions, and nip at the heels of those responsible until the problems are solved.

Young people are not turning into newspaper readers the way their parents did. Besides the fact that democracy will crumble without a strong press, this concerns me because I want to hold my job. I like being a newspaper editor, and I realize that without readers I am out on the curb with my suitcase on my knees wondering if I can get my old job back as a carhop. If young people are going to become newspaper readers again, we have to give them a reason.

Newspapers must look after the interests of young people. If a school administration is inept or corrupt; if

neighborhood parks aren't properly maintained; if children are dropping out of school or getting degrees for semi-literacy; if a child's life is clouded by racism, then we must expose the problem and stick to it relentlessly until it is solved. We must do this because we want to survive, and we must do this because it is right.

One of the problems that reporting news in the 1990's has is that we make a lot of decisions based on research. Research companies survey only those over the age of 18, leaving us to determine coverage of children's issues based heavily on our own fuzzy memories of it. Childhood is so different today from what it was when we were growing up that our memories are pretty well useless. At best, they are confined to our own small childhood circles.

Another problem is that we news folks tend to get diverted by breaking stories. The on-going, less noisy, less easily solvable problems of drug addicted babies, child abuse, teen pregnancies, and school dropout rates have gotten less prominent coverage, or coverage that flashed briefly and then died out like a shooting star.

We are an impatient nation, and we get easily bored by lingering stories. Literacy rates, wasn't that last year's problem? Haven't they — meaning not me fella— solved that yet? Children don't have money and they don't have votes, so they don't have the power to make their problems top priority. The ability to make those solutions top priority lies in this room — with you, the media.

In every city I have worked in, readers have complained about how negative news seems to be. Yet they don't want fluffy news reports about nice people doing nice things. *The Minneapolis Star* did a survey asking readers what they meant by "good news". What the readers said was their idea of good news is a story about a problem that has been solved.

We have the reputation of being bad news bearers because our custom has been to announce that the sky is falling and then run off and tell readers about another story before we tell them how to get a handle on this one. We give them an endless string of problems, without any solutions. It's no wonder they're depressed.

I sat at some news huddle one afternoon where we were looking at the stories for the next day's page one. I said, "Don't we have any stories that will give the readers the will to go on?"

At the *Fresno Bee* we have been taking our first steps in that direction. The feature department has recently produced a special, 16-page all news section on teenage pregnancy. We have one of the worst rates in the country in our six county area. The section outlined the problems, but also showed how those problems are being dealt with in other parts of the country, and how the Central San Joaquin Valley can deal with the problems. We ran off 2,000 reprints of the series. The reprints are gone, and we have done several follow-up stories which have been well received.

Surveys show that people don't trust institutions. They don't trust the government. They don't trust the military. They don't trust big business. And they're not too crazy about us. But, they want us to be good.

Readers know things are wrong in their world, but they feel powerless to do anything about it. They are afraid of losing their jobs or their friends. They are afraid of being sued or somehow harmed. They think the news business can stand the pressure, and we can. We are often the best hope and sometimes the only hope of making things better.

This conference will give us a chance not only to examine problems facing the nation's young people, but also to determine what our role is in solving them.

MORE MONEY, FEWER WORDS

JONATHAN KOZOL

I think there is a kind of ritual at these conferences that we have to get over, and it goes like this:

We come to these sessions and we start by rehashing a lot of startling statistics about poverty and children, relying on the Children's Defense Fund, which is, of course, the standard source. Then we present a lot of good things that we ought to do to solve these problems, and we list them off. Head Start is usually number one; even Republicans like Head Start. And then we say, "therefore, the solutions are near at hand; go out and do them."

I call this the ritual of pre-planned impotence, and it seems to me that we have to get over this ritual, because if the same ritual has been undertaken 20 times before for 20 years, to do it again is just self-deception. It is just kidding ourselves that it is going to make a difference this time.

Are we more eloquent than the 45 people who said the same things for the past 45 years? Are we in a more compassionate decade? No, we're not. It seems to me that the reason that the reiteration of these issues is so futile, and gives me such a sense of weariness and greyness, is that the one essential factor is left out. The ultimate problems are not those of lack of answers, but lack of political will. And the truth is that every answer to racial and economic inequality, and public education problems in the United States that we consider today was obvious ten years ago and 20 years ago. The reason we don't reach for these answers is that they are costly. They are costly most of all for us white and middle class and affluent who profit from inequity.

I know that we will spend a lot of time today dealing with these problems. I am sure that as we go through the day we will hear lots of plans for various programs that might work, might make a difference. But what I hope for most is that today and tomorrow we will be able to overcome the naivete'.

Nothing is going to change, none of these ideas are going to make any difference at all unless we deal with the central defect in American society. And that is this: most Americans do not want their children simply to have an equal chance with others; they want their children to have a better chance than others...And, as a result, they invariably want someone else's child to have a lesser chance.

There is no way to deal with these problems in the long run except by spending money. It is going to take a lot of money, and it is not going to come from nowhere. It is going to have to come from wealthy people, and that means taxes.

People, especially Congressmen, are always asking, "Can you really solve these problems by throwing money at them?" To me this is a perfectly amazing question. And every time I am asked the question I answer straightforwardly, "Of course you can." That's the best way to deal with poverty and inequality in this country—spend money. And the people who are going to have to spend it are people like you and me who have it.

I hope we can deal with that today.

THE KENTUCKY POST'S "YEAR OF THE CHILD"

JUDITH CLABES, Editor, *The Kentucky Post*

As an editor, I thought that my newspaper did as good a job as any when it came to routine coverage of children's issues. Now I know that routine isn't good enough.

Our opportunity to do better came, as all too often it does, in the form of a tragedy. On a bitterly cold December day in the waning hours of 1985, an ex-convict held two teenage brothers hostage at gunpoint in their home. For 33 hours he held police at bay, talking of life on the streets, drug abuse, child prostitution, and abuse in prison. A police marksman killed the ex-convict and freed the boys. From the story of his tragic life and death, a bitter lesson was learned about how an unbroken cycle of abuse, neglect, poverty, and disenfranchisement has no happy ending.

The grim reality jolted us into action. We were determined to do better than routine. We knew that the community's attention had been captured by the sensational stand-off, and we knew an opportunity when we saw it.

After we determined the issues raised by the situation, we fashioned a plan. We are a small paper, and our resources were strained, but we refused to be defined by our limitations. We felt that a smart plan, judicious use of existing resources, and a genuine commitment would allow us to do more than seemed possible at first flush. We were right.

We declared "Year Of The Child in Northern Kentucky", and we began a compelling series called "Dead End Streets," which dealt poignantly with street children and child prostitution. From there we moved to a comprehensive series on juvenile justice and the treatment of youth in state facilities. All of our investigations led logically to the home and such topics as teen pregnancy, latch key children, and shortages in day and foster care programs.

We soon found out that by taking the first steps to raise the level of public awareness about children's issues we had provided a forum where solutions could be profitably discussed. We were soon joined in a total effort toward finding solutions by school officials, public officials, community leaders, judges, social service agency people, juvenile officers, church leaders, students, parents, and grandparents. A year that began in the shadow of tragedy turned into a year of progress in combatting the problems of children.

Some of the positive developments that have occurred during recent years in Northern Kentucky are:

Judith Clabes (l) and Mary Hargrove (r).

- Our largest inner city school system received a grant to start a street-proofing program to teach children how to handle life in an urban environment.
- A Safe Place program for children in trouble was set up, and is still growing, reaching out into our suburbs.
- An A.A. program designed especially for teens was started.
- A runaway shelter was established in our largest city, where the need was greatest.
- As a result of our reporting, a state investigation into treatment centers for teen delinquents and emotionally disturbed children led to improved training for, and screening of, employees.
- Programs for teen parents were started around the state.
- A group of ministers started programs to involve their churches in the inner city.
- A committee for kids got a lot more attention--and money—from community leaders.
- The State Legislature increased penalties for sexual abuse of children.

Of course we cannot claim sole responsibility for all these developments, and for the many more that have taken place, but I do believe that we acted as a catalyst for change.

Teaming up with a social service agency, we printed a little book called "A Friend In Your Pocket," a list of help numbers for kids. We distributed them in schools throughout the region. We adopted an inner city school ourselves, and encouraged others to do the same. In the schools our staff volunteered as tutors and readers. We sponsored ice cream socials to reward kids who made the honor roll, and we gave out T-shirts for good attendance.We put money and effort into other programs that assist children, or recognize them for their achievements; for example, an academic all-stars banquet and a young authors program which this year involved 10,000 students. We published the winning pieces, and we regularly feature student work on our editorial page.

We went beyond reporting — although that is our first responsibility — to amalgamating a community in a very special way. We believed then, and we believe still, that good journalism is not foreclosed by a newspaper's genuine concern about its community, or by its commitment to those who are powerless to help themselves. Indeed, because the newspaper has power to shape a community, it has a special responsibility to use its resources as a positive force in that community. We went beyond good journalism to real community service, and our community discovered resources it didn't know it had.

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VOICING KIDS' CONCERNS

MARY HARGROVE, Managing Editor,
The Tulsa Tribune

I am the managing editor of *The Tulsa Tribune*, where we try to give children's issues prominent, regular coverage. It has been my experience that the best way to do this is to have an editor in charge of children's issues who makes sure that these issues get into the paper every day. At the *Tribune*, that has been my role, and now the whole staff knows that children are a priority at our paper.

The issues that affect kids' lives cut across too many boundaries to possibly be covered by one person. It goes into courts, and education, and hospitals, and politics, and the home. I think you really need a large perspective to do it right. That's why we made kids a major editorial objective of our paper.

In 1989 we did six series on children's issues. We dealt with problems ranging from latch key kids, to child abuse, to kids in jail. We presented the facts, and incorporated lots of examples from the real lives of families in our community. We also included in each series a page long tip sheet, with information about where and how to get help. We have also made a deliberate decision now to closely follow court cases involving kids, and to follow up on the charges — something we hadn't been doing very well before.

I think that a children's editor is probably a much better idea for most papers than, let's say, a beat reporter covering children's issues. The thing that is very difficult about a children's beat is the stress issue. When I was reporting on child abuse I was depressed all the time. That makes it difficult to write. I think if you did it full time you would never be able to do it; you would never get out of the doldrums and I think you would skewer your perspective.

One time I went down to Ottonga, Oklahoma, which is way out in the boonies, and I found these six kids who had been sexually abused by their mother's boyfriend. They hadn't had anything to eat and there wasn't any electricity in the house. The state had taken them out of foster care and put them back with their mother in this condition. I went to visit the kids and it was March and they didn't have any shoes. They had ringworm and lice, and there wasn't anything in the refrigerator. I went home and I took my son out to Wendy's and I sat down and then I started to cry. He was embarrassed to see his mom crying in a restaurant. I had to explain to him that I had just left those six kids back there, and they have never been to a place as nice as Wendy's and they never will be to a place as nice as Wendy's. I think that if I did that every day for a living I would probably jump out the window.

One of the things our staff did so well was that they made these things clear as issues. Sometimes the tendency is to go for dollars, and not for human stories. We try to go for human stories.

Finally, I'd like to add that we have tried as much as possible to make the Legislature in our state take responsibility for these problems.

There was a tremendously positive response to all of our series from the community, especially the one on child abuse. We got three local awards for that, and an enormous outpouring of letters and phone calls: people asking for help, people wanting to share their stories, people saying thank you.

MISTI SNOW, Editor, "Mindworks,"
Minneapolis *Star Tribune*

I am the editor for "Mindworks", a two-page section in the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* that appears on the first Tuesday of every month during the school year. Mindworks features essays by school children, which I introduce with a lead that usually runs about 60 inches. Mindworks is unlike anything else in the country. It humanizes all of these very difficult issues affecting kids, because it really allows the kids to speak with their own voice. Dr. Victor Sidel said earlier that statistics are people with the tears washed off. Mindworks has all the tears, all the laughter, all the whimsy, and all the heartbreak in every issue.

Mindworks has been running for seven years. In August we announce nine topics, one for each month from October to June. On average we get 5,000 to 6,000 essays a month. Most of our participants are from Minnesota, but sometimes a kid will move and we will get letters from someplace like Bogota, Colombia. All of the essays get read by myself and a freelance reader. I choose the essays I feel to be the best, and those go in the paper.

For those of us who know anything about children's issues, the problems can seem relentlessly grim. Sometimes the public is just overwhelmed by how grim it is, and then they don't want to hear any more frightening facts and statistics. One of the beauties of Mindworks is that it covers the whole spectrum of issues and concerns that are relevant to children. It's not just about good kids. It's not just about bad kids. Everything gets included.

We have run over 100 topics. The grimmest collection of essays I've ever read were the answers to the question: "What advice would you give to fathers or stepfathers about being good parents?" It was enormously depressing to read the kids' responses. The topics run the gamut, from the timely to the timeless, the environment to mom. This means that the problems dealt with include ones that are very manageable and some that seem to be daunting for all of us.

Last year we asked kids to write about fathers. This year about mothers. The contrasts were stunning; it was like reading love letters — which we usually don't get in Mindworks.

One of the things that kids write about constantly is the need to be told that they are loved. One time the topic was, "Of all the nice things people could say about you, which do you need most to hear?" One child wrote, "I need to be told I'm loved, and I need to be told tonight!" I know that every time Mindworks comes out there are conversations that occur between adults and children that don't occur otherwise. I get phone calls from parents who say, "We didn't know. We simply did not know that our child felt this way."

I don't consider Mindworks a kids' section. It is by kids, but it is for the whole community. It really is read by lots of parents, and lots of teachers, and by other people in the community. All of the essays are donated to the University of Minnesota, which has a research center for youth issues, so they will be preserved until they deteriorate.

If we identified Mindworks as a special kids' section then I think it would not have such a broad readership. I see food sections — I don't cook, so I throw it away. My fear is that a lot of grownups would see "Kids' Section" and throw it away. Putting it on the cover of our feature section is like sticking it in grownups' faces and saying "You've got to read us!" And they do.

TEEN PREGNANCY

**Each day 17,051 women get pregnant;
2,795 of them are teenagers.**

—Children's Defense Fund

*"Love is a gamble, love is a game.
Boys get you pregnant, girls take the blame.
They say you're cute, they say you are fine,
but when you are pregnant they say,
'It's not mine.'
One month of pressure, one month of pain,
one week in the hospital and a baby to name.
Love is sweet, love is swell, but when you are
pregnant love is hell."*

**KAREN JOHNSON PITTMAN,
Director, Educational Improvement/Adolescent
Pregnancy Prevention, Children's Defense Fund**

That was written by a young woman in the Atlanta public schools. A seventh grader.

I have a 12-year-old at home and she alternates between writing about clouds and writing about death. Here's a young woman who has something clearly concrete and real on her mind, and that is the reality of becoming pregnant at age 12 or age 13.

We've always had teen parents. Many of our parents were teen parents. It wasn't a big deal 40 years ago. It wasn't a big deal because marriages occurred when there were teen pregnancies. Today six out of ten of the young women under 20 who have children are single mothers.

The problem of teen pregnancy is really a problem of timing. Having a child is a fundamentally positively valued behavior. The trouble is that it is mistimed. It is mistimed exactly when the connections between school completion, employment, and marriage are not there. As soon as those are shaky we find pregnancy sort of drawing in like a magnet and happening at earlier and earlier ages.

We say, "finish school, get a job, get married, and then have kids." Of all those things which is the easiest to do? Have kids. We put it last, but it really is the easiest thing to do. And the irony is that 40 years ago, 30 years ago, even 20 years ago when we did that easy first step, as lots of us did, we quickly backtracked. We left school in the tenth or 11th grade. We found a job. As a young family we might have been in a tenuous situation; we might have been worse off than those who waited and did things in the prescribed order, but we were not guaranteed the poverty that teen parents are today.

Eighty percent of the young women who are under 25 who have children are living in poverty simply because it's impossible to support a family on one income, especially if you're working part-time and trying to raise a child. Those young women tend to have low basic skills. A lot of them don't have high school diplomas. Without some influx of training and income support for some reasonable period of time, they're not going to get to a point where they're going to be able to earn enough money to move out of poverty.

If we are going to help our young people avoid this trap, we are going to have to take a youth development approach. We need to change our assumptions and stop regarding teen pregnancy as an isolated problem.

First we must start by committing more of our resources as a society to expanding the opportunities available to young people. If we put them on more stable economic ground and let them know that they can make it through to adulthood, then we have gone most of the way towards a real solution.

But it is equally important that we take an approach that assumes that these are valuable young people, young people whom we value and want to use immediately. In doing that we must be fully aware that our ultimate goal is to help them move from adolescence to adulthood, prepared to take on adult responsibilities, adult challenges, and some of the nice things that come with being an adult. We must let them know in every way that parenthood is one of those things that really needs to wait. It is a message that I think we could deliver, that we should deliver, and that is delivered especially well when we put it in a positive context, and show that we are willing to give them the help that they need to make it.

STREET KIDS & AIDS

MARILYN ROCKY,
North American Director of Childhope

Street children are basically on the street to work and in many cases prostitution or sex is the easiest way to bring in that money. AIDS becomes more and more prevalent in the lives of these children who must use their bodies to earn their living. In order to help these children get off the street we have to find them alternative ways of making a living that are better than prostitution, and that make them less vulnerable to AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Brazil has an active movement of street youth run and organized by the youth themselves. These young people got so pissed off at the state of their lives that they came together four years ago to try and put an end to the intolerable situation of life on the streets in Brazil. At this particular gathering, 800 kids with an average age of 12 marched en mass to the Senate Chamber where they were to listen to the senators. However, with 800 kids versus a dozen senators, the senators listened to the kids. One after the other came up to the podium and grabbed the microphone. One young man pointed his finger at the President of the Senate of Brazil and said, "My life is so bad there's nothing you can do to me that would make a difference. I'm not afraid of you." Then, his peers came up after him and said, "We don't ask for much. We don't want to be murdered. We're tired of being assassinated." They said, "We want to go to school. We want our papers. We want to work. We have no place to go for health care."

Last week there was an announcement that the new President of Brazil, Collor de Mello, has instituted a whole new ministry on behalf of what he called 50 million children in need. The service providers in Brazil are somewhat skeptical, but it is a presidential order. And they feel that (such progress) has a lot to do with the national movement of street youth.

ELIZABETH PREBLE,
Senior Advisor, AIDS Prevention
Programme for UNICEF

I'm going to try and give you a quick tour of what it's like to be in Africa now with the AIDS epidemic and what it's like to be a child under the age of five with AIDS. The situation in Africa is considerably different because the HIV virus is primarily transmitted heterosexually and through blood transfusions. You also have peri-natal transmission. When a woman is pregnant, she passes a number of very helpful substances through her body into her unborn baby. Unfortunately, the HIV virus is transmitted to the baby this way, and you have between 25 and 40 percent of babies who are born to HIV positive mothers who themselves are born with AIDS.

Why do women in Africa and the Caribbean have babies if they're HIV infected? First of all, most of them don't know they're infected. There are very few testing facilities. They don't know voluntary testing in Africa as we do here. There's also little education about the virus.

You don't have any other disease in the world that strikes both little babies and both of their parents. This is something unprecedented in medical history. Many HIV infected babies die within the first year of life. And our colleagues in the World Health Organization estimate that almost all will be dead by age five.

Almost every woman who dies of AIDS is leaving behind several kids. You saw a photograph in the *New York Times* of a grandmother in Uganda who's raising 12 grandchildren from her children who died of AIDS. This is now a very common pattern in Uganda. What's going to happen to these kids with no parents? Many of them will become street kids and those fortunate enough not to get AIDS from their mothers are going to be at very high risk of getting the HIV infection once they're on the streets.

UNICEF is working primarily on the prevention side, trying to get into elementary schools and secondary schools in Africa and tell kids how to prevent getting AIDS. We also have programs for the parents.

LEONARDO ESCOBAR,
Programa Boscania-La Florida

I represent Boscania-La Florida, a program for 1,000 kids in Bogota, Columbia. I was on the streets from age eight to 12 (until) I became a part of this program. We have about 30 houses around the country. We have five steps kids from the streets go through to finish the high school program and the vocational training.

When I review my life at home, I find that the combination of poverty and abuse pushed me into the streets. My mother was abused by her mother and after, by my father. Therefore, she did the same thing with me. My father is an alcoholic who never took any responsibility at home. At school, the teachers demanded things that they thought were good for me; however, they didn't address my personal needs. My friends in school were the only ones who understood how difficult my life at home was.

I became an adult when I was eight years old because I needed to supply my own needs. Clothes, food, everything. The streets were for me a home, a school. I developed unusual skills that led me to survive in a very dangerous environment. In contrast, people would look at me as a problem for the city. They didn't know who I was or how I became a street child.

Finally one day Father Hasverdin Nicolo, the founder of the Bosconia program looked at me as an important person. He treated me with love and respect. He gave me back my dignity that society took away. Through the steps of the Bosconia program, I discovered and developed aspects of my personality that I didn't know before. Now I represent in many ways the program. I have been a teacher at and director of the school. I just finished the university in Bogota and now have been accepted into a masters program in Vermont.

FETAL ALCOHOL & DRUG SYNDROME

"Before the Symposium, I knew that drugs were a big problem in this country. I knew that drinking while you are pregnant was bad, but I never knew just how bad or how little you had to drink to hurt your baby. I was really shocked to find out that using cocaine only one time while you're pregnant could mess up your baby—make it retarded and stuff. I think we have a good health class at my school. They tell you lots of stuff. But they really should tell us this. Every kid should know about this."

—Allison Kent, 13

DR. LARRY CULPEPPER,
Associate Professor, Brown University/Memorial Hospital of Rhode Island

Women need to be made aware that even limited use of alcohol or cocaine during pregnancy can lead to major life long problems for their children.

The popular conception is that alcoholics and cocaine addicts are the only ones who are putting their kids at risk. This is a mistake. The damage that can occur during pregnancy can occur with social drinking. It can occur with social use of cocaine.

We overlook the fact that probably 80% of women who use cocaine are not heavy users. They are women from all backgrounds, including white middle class women, who think that using cocaine, at a party for instance, is okay. But one use of cocaine early in pregnancy, perhaps before a woman knows she is pregnant, is enough to harm the child. A woman who has a drink after work, goes home and has another while fixing supper, and then relaxes with her husband later on and has a third drink, has tripled her chances of having a retarded child.

> "A woman who has a drink after work, goes home and has another while fixing supper, and then relaxes with her husband later on and has a third drink, has tripled her chances of having a retarded child."

The message we must get out is: if you are pregnant, or likely to become pregnant, don't drink. Don't use cocaine.

We are very early in developing our understanding of what cocaine does to babies as they grow up, but we know already that it affects almost every system in the body. It affects the brain. It affects the G.I. System. It affects the heart. These kids have major defects that will keep them from effectively functioning as adults.

We know much more about Fetal Alcohol Syndrome because it has been studied for a longer time. Babies with the full-blown syndrome are generally mentally retarded. Their average IQ is somewhere in the neighborhood of 68 to 70. In addition to mental retardation, they tend to be small at birth, and often they have abnormal faces, with small eyes and flat noses. Many of them have cardiac defects as well.

In spite of these signs, many of these kids are not recognized at birth. Some of the more subtle maladies effecting these kids show up only as they grow older.

Trouble may first show up in school-aged kids. Their mental ability may be in the normal range on testing, but they have great difficulty mastering school work. They may be able to read words, but not be able to comprehend what the words mean, or what a paragraph means. They have difficulty in impulse control, and tend to hop from one thing to another. They have trouble with math. They have great difficulty relating to other kids; many turn into bullies or loners.

As these kids grow up they tend not to be able to work. They can't hold a job, so they become people who are in great need of support from their communities. They become a drain on society's resources throughout their adult lives.

The problems facing kids born with FAS or with the complications related to maternal cocaine use are complicated by the fact that the mother, who has been drinking or using coke, is frequently much less able to be an adequate parent. The combination of a child who is damaged and is therefore unable to relate well to the mother, and a mother who is damaged herself, makes for a very difficult family. These are the families we see on our child welfare rolls. We see them in child abuse registries. These are the kids that show up dead in our emergency rooms.

It makes a lot of sense for us to do as much as possible to prevent pregnant women from using cocaine and alcohol. The majority of women who are placing their infants at risk may not be aware that they are doing so. In 1985 there was a federally funded national study that discovered that close to three fourths of

women knew that alcohol can damage babies. But their estimate of how much alcohol it takes was higher than three drinks a day. Most of the women said "a few more drinks than what I drink" as the level. There is clearly room for more education.

The same thing is true for cocaine. Most women who may use cocaine on a social basis, that is they don't purchase it themselves but if their boyfriend has it, or if they go to a party and it is present will use it, have the impression that using it once is not a problem. "I'm not addicted," they say. "I don't have a problem." That single use may be very damaging, and that is a message women—especially the young women who become parents as teens—don't frequently hear. We need to let them know. We need to get the message out.

I think we need two kinds of programs. One's much more difficult than the other. The simple program, the simple answer is to build it into the school curriculums. We need to build it into the media that gets directly to kids. We need to do a much better job, not of using scare tactics with kids, but of presenting kids with realistic information. That's the easy answer.

I think the far more difficult answer is that we need to work with adults so that adults are much more comfortable discussing sexuality, family planning, alcohol use, and drug use with kids. I'm on a project where we are trying to work with the adults and affect the adults so that they can deal more with the kids they have contact with. What we find is that most adults are very interested in and actually scared to death of these topics. What we need is programs and media attention that make adults comfortable with serious topics and capable of engaging in serious conversations with teens and kids in the nine, ten, 11-year-old groups.

EDUCATIONAL INEQUITIES

"New York City now invests about $5,000 every year in Richard's education. In the suburban school I have now described, the principal told me that $11,000 is spent every year on every child's education. It occurred to me how little has changed for poor black kids in the United States in a quarter of a century."

—Jonathan Kozol

JONATHAN KOZOL

One of the most explicit values that business has brought to bear when it tries to advise the urban schools on how to redesign themselves is a heavy emphasis on tracking. The almost automatic response of business leaders I have seen, when they move into the public education arena, is to talk about efficiency. When we talk about efficiency, the most efficient thing to do from a short term point of view is to separate kids according to skills as rigidly and as early as you can. If this happens to segregate them by race as well, then the business leaders can justify it because it is more efficient. The efficiency thrust of business has created dramatic forms of in-school segregation.

Another favorite agenda of the business community is Schools of Choice. This will probably be the dominant news story in the next year because several right wing institutes and think tanks are about to issue reports favoring the idea of Schools of Choice. When business talks about schools of choice, basically what they are talking about is tracking between schools. They are going to create schools especially suited for the special needs of particular children. That sounds benign, but in fact what that really means is that we will create a wonderful humanities academy that will be beautifully adapted to the special needs of white middle class children, and we will have another school which will be beautifully suited to the special needs of future auto mechanics and hair dressers. And that, I'm afraid, is happening all over America today.

JOAN LIPSITZ, Program Director for Education, The Lilly Endowment

What happens if you say tracking is not something that is done by nefarious evil people to hurt children? Tracking is something that is done to reduce diversity, to manage diversity and schools manage diversity. And one of the ways they do that is to put like children together. What does it take to keep schools diverse and not make teaching cruel and unusual punishment? Now when I taught in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, we were under orders from the Office of Civil Rights not to have identifiable groups of children in our schools. And I learned, no one taught me, I learned how to teach. We had

no ability grouping and I learned how to teach Junior High and High School students without ability grouping, and I burned out very, very, very quickly. I was offered a job at twice the salary and left. Now, what do we want schools to do? How do we want to manage diversity without re-segregating, without tracking children. Because tracking will be economically and, therefore, racially, identifiable. And to me this is a management issue. But it's a management issue that is driven not by political will, not by having strategies, but by values, deeply held values which we are losing.

I don't think that we are going to solve these issues of child poverty with anything short of a Marshall Plan for children in this country. And I don't think that we are going to get a Marshall Plan until we stop saying platitudes like children can't vote, and start understanding that these are not children's issues. These are issues that are vitally important to all Americans; to America's future, as well as America's now.

DEBORAH MEIER, Principal, Central Park East Secondary School, N.Y.C

Every time someone tells me what the gifted need I always think, that's funny. That's what other kids need at least as much

as the gifted. I think a good school takes kids in from completely across the range. At Central Park East we have a very heavy percentage of children who have learning disabilities. We have some children who are considered mildly retarded. We have some children who are considered very gifted. And we do not track in any place in the school, including mathematics classes. That always startles people. We keep students in a multi-age setting. Kids who are in the equivalent of seventh or eighth grades spend two years together. Then they move into a grouping which contains nineth and tenth graders and then they move on into another grouping which they stay in until they can prove to us that they are ready to graduate.

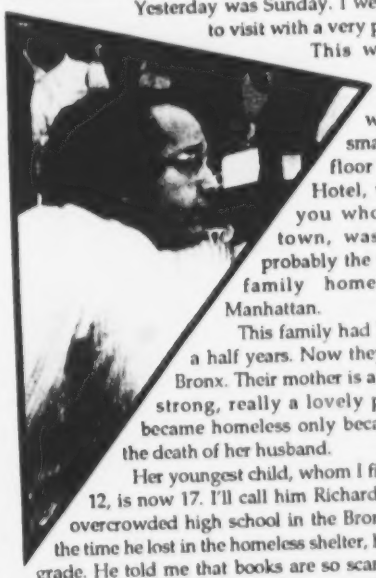
My four-year-old granddaughter and I have wonderfully stimulating conversations. We are not exactly in the same place but the topic is the same and we both come away feeling invigorated. I think that can happen in school. In fact to me multi-age, multi-talented classes are actually easier to teach because there are more people feeding ideas back and forth. When a student doesn't grasp something, there are other students who were recently where this kid who's having trouble is. They can help him or her figure things out. One person tries one way of explaining it. Then somebody else tries another way. So the dialogue in the class becomes really important.

JOAN LIPSITZ

We say we cannot do different things for identifiable groups of children because if we do different things for identifiable groups we are demolishing the social equity agenda as we defined it in the 1960's. So that the social equity agenda, as we defined it in the 1960's, seems luxurious to some of us now. But we defined ourselves that way and we are therefore in a kind of internal civil war about what to do and we don't talk about it. Why don't we talk about it? Perhaps we don't talk about it, as William Julius Wilson says, because of what happened to people who talked about race like Moynihan in the Moynihan Report. We learned a lesson and it was a serious and awful lesson. That you can get terribly attacked by talking about these issues unless you are not white. So many of us, and most people in academia and most people setting policy and most people in foundations as I now am, are white. And we are being silent because we are afraid to be racists. And we are much more comfortable talking from the 1960's agenda about what needs to happen with children. And we look at a report like, "Investing In Children," and "Children In Need," from the Committee on Economic Development, which says it cannot be business as usual anymore. We have to do something different. But we don't. The reporters in this country have not asked CED the second level question. If different meant separation, if different meant separatism, if different meant re-segregation, what would you do? And I want to tell you what the answer is, because I've asked it. The answer is we would re-segregate. And I want you to think about that because I think that's what's happening now. I know what is very, very tempting for me. What's very tempting for me is to play Rip Van Winkle. Just to sleep through this time. And sleep with my eyes open so I make a living and make believe this all isn't happening. And what will wake me up? What will wake me up is either, because I am not immume to poverty, what will wake me up is either that I fall into it, or that somebody who has been thrown into it and can't get out and has given up, will attack me. The other way is if the press wakes me up and starts asking these very difficult questions of us.

JONATHAN KOZOL

I have studied the unforgivable inequalities of public education for many years now. Although there are plenty of disquieting statistics, I'm not going to drown you with them. Instead, I'd simply like to share with you some of the things I've seen in recent days and even in recent hours.



Yesterday was Sunday. I went up to the Bronx to visit with a very poor family I know. This was a family I've known for many years when they were living in a small room on the 12th floor of the Martinique Hotel, which for those of you who are from out of town, was the largest and probably the most squalid of the family homeless shelters in Manhattan.

This family had lived there four and a half years. Now they're living up in the Bronx. Their mother is a remarkable woman, strong, really a lovely person. The family became homeless only because of poverty and the death of her husband.

Her youngest child, whom I first met when he was 12, is now 17. I'll call him Richard. He goes to a large, overcrowded high school in the Bronx, but because of all the time he lost in the homeless shelter, he is a year behind his grade. He told me that books are so scarce at his high school that he went to English class for two months in the fall last year before the school supplied him with a textbook.

Richard spent the entire year without a text in science and therefore couldn't bring it home at night to study or ask his mother for assistance with his homework. He spent all this past weekend studying for his final exams in math and English but because the school requires the kids to pass-in their textbooks prior to the end of the semester, he was without his math and English textbooks. He is a sweet kid, very serious and gentle, and has never been in trouble with the law.

Richard would like to go to college. He talks about it a lot. He knows that math and English will be very important. But he cannot get the help he needs from underpaid and overburdened teachers. He is feeling overwhelmed in math. He asked his teacher earlier this year if he could come to her for extra help (a normal request at most schools), but she informed him that she didn't have the time. He asked if he could even come to school an hour early in the morning so she could help him before school started, but it turned out that security procedures at the school made that impossible. Sitting in his kitchen yesterday, I helped him review his math and English even without the textbooks. He had some mimeographed sheets there. He was scared of the exams, naturally. In math he was asked to solve the following equation: If $2X + 14 = 14$, what is X? He found this baffling.

Richard is at the end of his tenth grade year. In English he was told that he would have to know the parts of speech. In the sentence, "Jack walks to the store," he couldn't identify the verb. He was disappointed not just about this, but about other problems as well.

We left the apartment and we walked out onto the street. It was a nice afternoon. It was a grim neighborhood, but there were a lot of families out on the street, and it was cheerful. Richard is a big kid, tall and handsome and strong looking, but

Richard is a big kid, tall and handsome and strong looking, but out on the street when we said goodbye, his eyes filled up with tears. And although he is taller than I am and a tough looking kid, he hugged me.

One week before, I spent the day at one of the finest public high schools in the suburbs of New York. I won't name the suburb, but some of you could probably imagine where it is. The school looked like a little university. It was surrounded by green lawns and lovely trees. It was built around a courtyard. The classes were small. The typical class was 14 children. At Richard's school, he had 32 kids in his English class. There were lots of guidance counselors for kids in trouble, but not many kids in trouble out in the suburbs. The kids were amazingly articulate. They were terrific in math and English. Most of them had done that equation Richard couldn't solve, in the seventh grade. They didn't wait two months in the fall before they got a textbook. Every child in the school is white. I didn't see one black child, and I was there all day. They were all heading for college.

Over two decades since the death of Martin Luther King, public schools in a large portion of this nation are still separate, still unequal. To me this is the great unspoken secret of the public education system of this nation. It is a story that the press has covered poorly, and reluctantly, and never with the urgency and passion that a gross injustice should command.

Indeed, the press treats this issue so seldom that when the issue is pressed by a person like myself, the response is likely to be: "Well, that is an old story. We dealt with that in the 1960's." To the extent that the press does treat these issues, it's done so in a very detached manner and typically only in court suits brought by parents of poor children. *The New York Times* tells of inequalities in education down in Texas and Kentucky and New Jersey; almost never of the inequalities here in New York City.

Let me take you on a journey. During the course of the past year, I have been in public schools all over the United States. I have been to 25 schools in a dozen cities this year. What I have seen is a panorama of despair. High school teachers in a New Jersey city told me that they are entering ninth graders that read at the fifth grade level. A junior high school principal in the same New Jersey city said that 20% of children in his school will never get to high school.

These are junior high school kids. If 650 enter sixth grade, he reports, we'll see 150 disappear before they get to ninth grade. I am astonished at the gullibility of education writers for most newspapers, in non-critically accepting the numbers released by the local board of education which are notoriously low. I mean always so low as to be beyond any possible credibility.

The New York Times nowadays gives a statistic for New York dropouts for the New York City public schools which is not only lower than the national average, but even lower than the average for the state of New York. A typical figure they give is something like 28%; the real figure is over 45%. But of course, the crucial factor is that none of these reporters included the numbers of kids who dropout before they even get to high school. In every major city that is at least another 10%.

In the city I was describing in New Jersey, of 1,400 children who attend one high school, over 800 disappear over the course of four years. Of 200 who graduate, only 60 even take SAT's. Of these, only 20 enter a four year college. The only truly beautiful new building in the city is a modern prison. A library was demolished to build the prison. In New Jersey I saw several schools where up to 60 children with two teachers had to share an undivided classroom suitable for 20 kids.

In Chicago, principals told me of spring days when substitute teachers are so scarce that 1,800 children come to school in this city and find no teachers, not even a sub. At one high school right here in New York City, the rain pours in through a crumbling roof and makes a waterfall onto the main stairway. The principal told me that they had to close it off whenever it rained.

In East St. Louis, an all-black city, which the local press refers to as the American Soweto, I walked into a school bathroom that had no soap, no water, no sinks, no toilet seats, no toilet paper. That is common in ghetto schools everywhere in America. You walk into these schools and suddenly you just stop and you think to yourself: this is America. Can't we afford toilet paper?

Countless elementary schools in several cities have no playgrounds, no outside space of any kind at all. In Camden, New Jersey, which is said to be second only to East St. Louis as the poorest small city in America, a principal took me into a computer lab where 30 of 40 computers didn't work. The room was so hot I thought I had a fever and then I saw the principal pulling at his neck tie trying to loosen his shirt. He said to me that the problem is that the boiler room is right beneath us and we can't control the heat, so it's either freezing or else it's in the 90's in the room. He looked at me and said: "Would you want to teach here in this school or study here?" And then he said, "The damn computers must have melted." And that, in fact, is what had happened, according to the computer expert at the school. They call it the great computer meltdown at Woodrow Wilson High.

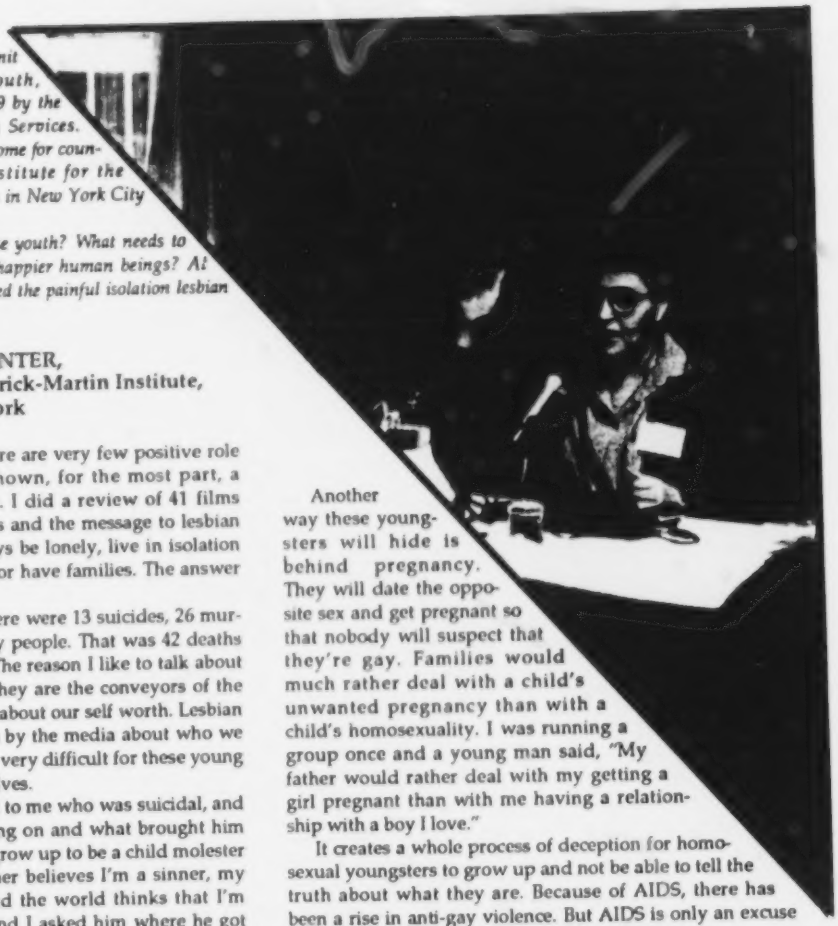
In one New Jersey city where an elementary school burned to the ground, three adjacent all-white suburbs told the city that black children were not welcome even on a temporary basis, though all three suburbs had empty buildings. In every city, I was startled to come into schools in which of 600 to 2,000 children, you might see at most five children who were white. It's just amazing to see that in 1990. I mean that is right where we were in 1964 when I started teaching. Again and again I would enter segregated public schools — ironically named for Martin Luther King. I wonder if he would want his name on segregated public schools. There must be a segregated public school in every city in America now. In East St. Louis, a junior high school named for Dr. King is 99.9% non-white. The dream is dead in East St. Louis, a student told me. A fifth grade boy in Paterson, New Jersey, wrote a poem and read it to to his classmates. It went: "Roses are red, violets are blue, but the roses are dying and so are you."

Now I want to tell you about the elementary school I visited in Chicago, the elementary school in which there were 49 over-aged sixth grade children in a single classroom with an uncertified sub. They were doing a dictionary lesson, but there weren't enough dictionaries for the children so they had to double up. A little boy who could barely read looked for a word and when he found it, he tore the page out of the dictionary and put it in his pocket. The teacher said: "Leave the page in the book because somebody else will need to use that dictionary some day." "That's their problem," the child said. "This is my word." Later the principal said to me how sad it is that children out in affluent Winnetka, a suburb of Chicago, do not need to steal words from a dictionary. Most of them are reading at the eighth grade level by their fifth grade year. Whoever thought that ownership of words would come to be a scarce commodity in our society?

GAY TEENS:
STRUGGLING FOR ACCEPTANCE

Lesbian and gay teenagers are two to three times more likely to commit suicide than are heterosexual youth, according to a study released in 1989 by the Department of Health and Human Services. Thirty percent of the teenagers who come for counseling to the Hetrick-Martin Institute for the Protection of Lesbian and Gay Youth in New York City have attempted suicide.

What are the main issues for these youth? What needs to change in the world for them to be happier human beings? At Symposium III, Joyce Hunter described the painful isolation lesbian and gay teens face in today's world.



JOYCE HUNTER,
Director of Programs, Hetrick-Martin Institute,
New York

For lesbian and gay youth there are very few positive role models. The media has only shown, for the most part, a negative view of homosexuality. I did a review of 41 films which had homosexual characters and the message to lesbian and gay people was: you'll always be lonely, live in isolation and not be able to have children or have families. The answer for you is death.

In 41 films that I looked at there were 13 suicides, 26 murders and one mass murder of gay people. That was 42 deaths in 41 films plus a mass murder. The reason I like to talk about films and the media is because they are the conveyors of the values of a society. They teach us about our self worth. Lesbian and gay youth grow up with lies by the media about who we are as a people, and that makes it very difficult for these young people to feel good about themselves.

I had a young person referred to me who was suicidal, and when I asked him what was going on and what brought him to this, he said, "I don't want to grow up to be a child molester so I'm better off dead. My mother believes I'm a sinner, my church believes I'm a sinner and the world thinks that I'm going to hurt other children." And I asked him where he got this kind of information, and he said from everywhere: from TV, the news and films.

Many times youth who go to other agencies are told, "Oh, you'll get over it if you get married or have a girlfriend," rather than helping them to accept themselves for what they are.

One of the main problems for these young people is being isolated. There is the fear of losing their families and of losing peer support. They also can't be open about their sexuality because it puts them at risk for violence. According to a study of 500 youth coming to our agency, 41% reported having suffered violence from their families, peers and strangers.

This means they cannot relate in an honest way when discussing friends, sexuality and relationships. They become less comfortable in engaging in after-school activities, clubs, dances and all of that. Many become over-achievers. They become too busy to date, and they put their sexuality aside, hoping that they'll deal with it in the future or maybe that it'll go away.

Another way these youngsters will hide is behind pregnancy. They will date the opposite sex and get pregnant so that nobody will suspect that they're gay. Families would much rather deal with a child's unwanted pregnancy than with a child's homosexuality. I was running a group once and a young man said, "My father would rather deal with my getting a girl pregnant than with me having a relationship with a boy I love."

It creates a whole process of deception for homosexual youngsters to grow up and not be able to tell the truth about what they are. Because of AIDS, there has been a rise in anti-gay violence. But AIDS is only an excuse for people to act out their homophobia violently.

Anti-bias related crime legislation must be passed. Thirteen states still have laws against hate crimes that exclude crimes based on sexual orientation, according to a 1990 report by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force in Washington D.C. What's happened is legislators are giving the message to society that it's OK to attack a certain group of people while it's not OK to attack other groups.

The schools need to start dealing with bias-related incidents. We need to sensitize teachers and students to and demystify homosexuality. There also need to be programs that counsel victims of bias-related violence. We need to conduct a library project to include materials for lesbian and gay youth. They need role models, just as heterosexual youngsters need role models.

We must not teach our children to hate. For in doing so, we corrupt them and rob them of their humanity towards other people.

INSTITUTIONAL CHILD ABUSE

Institutional child abuse is when the system ignores the special needs of children, or treats them as less than full citizens when it comes to protecting their rights. In this society, kids are disenfranchised, and they have little power to shape the institutions that affect them. They are dependent for protection on the good will of adults, and on rules and laws which they cannot change. When those laws work against kids, rather than for them, even the best intentions of adults can fail to prevent injustice.

When young people are in trouble they face special problems. A child who becomes involved with the penal system, or is admitted to a psychiatric hospital, has likely already had significant problems with his family, and has broken one or more of society's rules. We should be especially careful to make sure that the rights of these kids are protected when they are in this vulnerable position. Yet it is here that we take away the safety net and allow our children to fall through the cracks in the law.

In this plenary session we heard from two experts on institutional child abuse: Professor Ira Schwartz, professor, University of Michigan School of Social Work and the author of (In)Justice for Juveniles *and Judge Frank Orlando, Director, Center for Youth Policy, Florida Atlantic University. They gave us a chilling picture of the problems facing children in trouble.*

PSYCHIATRIC INCARCERATION

IRA SCHWARTZ

One-third of a million children are being propelled into hospitals for psychiatric, drug, and alcohol treatment each year, and these numbers are growing by leaps and bounds, especially among children under 12. All the evidence we have indicates that upwards of two-thirds of these children could be treated, and their families worked with, outside the hospital with much less cost and with better results.

Institutional child abuse in the area of mental health is a difficult topic to discuss at a conference like this. So much of what we have been talking about here has to do with the inadequacy of resources available to young people, especially poor young people. This is a problem that has to do with large amounts of money being wasted on the unneccessary and often punitive treatment of mostly white, middle class kids.

There is a lot of greed involved in all of this. Money is available to pay for beds because Medicaid and most private insurance programs have incentives to put kids in hospitals rather than keep them outside. Private, profit-making hospital corporations want to get at that money, and the way for them to do that is to build more hospitals. They have lobbied state legislatures to eliminate the criteria for approving new hospital construction, so that there are even some states now that actually have too many inpatient beds for children. To fill all the beds, and to get all that Medicaid and insurance money, hospitals advertise heavily.

In most cities around the country, if you turn on the television you will see ads for hospitals claiming to cure just about everything from failing grades to psychosis. Not only are hospitals advertising that they can cure everything, but they are very seductive and very misleading in the way that they advertise. They essentially tell parents this kind of message: "If your child is having difficulty, you owe it to yourself, as a responsible parent, to bring your child into our hospital for diagnostic assessment." If you don't, the ads usually say that something very terrible can happen to your child. They could end up in jail, or committing suicide. In addition, the ads remind the parents that their insurance will pick up the tab.

This would be no big deal if hospitalization was unnecessary but harmless. The truth is otherwise. I have had an opportunity now to visit over 120 hospitals throughout the country. I don't think that they are going to let me into too many more, because I keep finding the same sort of things: very primitive behavior modification regimes where kids start out in some cases wearing pajamas, and have to earn points so they can wear their own clothes, or even earn points to eat better food.

These are the kinds of things that used to go on in public training schools that were thrown out in the 1950's and 1960's: heavy use of solitary confinement, oftentimes for very minor rule violations like talking back to staff; heavy use of four-point restraints, handcuffs, and leg cuffs where children are tied to bedposts; denial of visitation, in some cases including parents. One of the real twists of irony here is that the problems that usually result in a child being hospitalized are family related, yet hospitals do very little work with families, and, as I said, even deny visitation.

Even though we are talking about institutional child abuse, the tendency is to ask why parents are putting their kids in these hospitals? I think that that sort of brings up how this is part of a larger social problem. The parents, too, are faced with very difficult problems in trying to deal with children whose needs they cannot meet. It is not a matter of wanting to hurt their children; it is a matter of not knowing how to help them.

There is a tremendous need for assistance within the home. What is needed are community-based services to help families become better at solving these problems *before* they get to the point where the parents hold up their hands and say, "Well if the institution is the best solution, then so be it!

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KIDS DEPRIVED OF LEGAL REPRESENTATION

JUDGE FRANK ORLANDO

The Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Supreme Court all say that children, as well as adults, have the right to a lawyer, to effective representation, to counsel. This right is guaranteed. And yet that guarantee means very little for the vast numbers of incarcerated children in this country who have never been defended by a lawyer. Fewer than 50% of all children appearing in court are represented by counsel. Why is that? Why does that happen?

It happens because most juveniles with a criminal charge against them waive their right to a lawyer. In adult cases this is almost never done, but for kids, in juvenile court, the court is seen by the lawyers, the judges, and by the parents as existing not to provide the child with a fair hearing, but to get the kid off the streets and into a supervised setting, even if that means a prison, as quickly as possible.

Research has shown that kids can't really understand what it means to waive their right to counsel. In a court system where this is not adaquately explained to the child, and in fact where the opposite is true — where he is told by adults that it is not important — there is little reason for that child to take care to make sure that he gets a good lawyer.

In many instances the waiver is done at the behest of a judge who talks the boy or girl out of counsel with the promise, "Don't worry, I'll take care of you." Parents, who if they were in trouble would not hesitate to hire an attorney, are willing to throw their children at the mercy of the court because they trust what they think of as a helping institution.

Basically, the law says that a child that is not convicted of a crime cannot be sent to any kind of incarceration, or be detained. But the law also says that if there is a violation of a valid court order, then the judge can hold the child in contempt and commit the child to a correctional facility. I know of cases where kids have been sent to jails, adult jails, for violating these court orders. For a court order to be valid, according to the law, it must be entered after the child received a fair hearing and had the opportunity to be represented by counsel, but probably 99% of kids who are charged as status offenders never see a lawyer, and aren't even given the opportunity to waive a lawyer because the charge against them is less than criminal.

It happens in this way. The child is brought before a judge, who is supposed to be a kindly old gentleman who is going to say "you must go to school," or "you must stay home at night." In most cases there is not a real look at the causes of the child's behavior, and because there has usually been a breakdown in the whole system of dealing with these problems within the family, the behavior continues. The child is brought back. An order is entered saying, "You must go to school, you can't run away from home, and you must be in by curfew." A whole set of standards for conduct are put in a court order, and the judge signs it, and rules that if the child violates the order then he is being disrespectful to the judge, and will be in contempt of court. And then if the kid breaks the rules, the judge has the right to sentence him to up to six months in jail or a detention center, without any real criminal trial.

Legal representation is essential if you want to have justice in this system. Without proper legal representation, a child's fate is determined by the whim and prejudice of the judge. If a judge decides he wants to send a kid away, there are basically two outcomes: one is to send him to a state reformatory; the other is to send him to a private treatment program, which offers a lot more in terms of educational services. About 60% of the kids in the state reformatory are black. 40% are white. You start talking about the more advanced rehabilitation programs and you find that about 25% of the kids are black; 75% are white. There seems to be a sense among judges that rehabilitation is for white kids only. Lack of legal representation for black children and the high rate at which kids waive counsel contributes to this problem. This raises, I think, serious questions about the properness of juvenile court procedure in the United States.

> "Without proper legal representation, a child's fate is determined by the whim and prejudice of the judge."

We really need to consider a non-waivable appointment of counsel at the earliest point of the proceedings. The ABA, IJA standards for juvenile courts have long recommended that that be the system in juvenile court. At least we need a system that says that before a child can waive a lawyer he must have an independent attorney who discusses with the child in private what the lawyer is for, and what you are really giving up if you don't have one.

The only way to insure the quality of justice in the juvenile court is to make sure that the children are represented as they are supposed to be. Only then can we know that if a child is convicted, he at least gets a fair trial. We have to remember that this is not Kiddie Court. It is Due Process Court.

CHILDREN ARE DYING

"The untold story of this decade is that children as a class are becoming poor at a rate that is drastically higher than that of adults, and children as a class are becoming victims of violence at a rate that is very different from the rate that adults are."
—Dennis Nurske, Defense for Children International U.S.A.

MICHAEL PETIT,
Director, Center for Program Exellence,
Child Welfare League of America

What I want to talk with you about is the overall pattern of mortality among children in this country. Not infant mortality, but zero to 18-years-old, a subject that I think has been significantly under-reported in this country.

In the last three years, I've been in 43 states, and I've been doing this type of work for 22 years. I can say flatly that the status of children today is absolutely worse than it was 20 years ago, ten years ago or three years ago.

There are about 70,000 children a year that die in the United States. Among the most striking statistics about these deaths is this: there is a wildly disproportionate relationship between whether or not you are poor and whether or not you die as a child. There is at least a three times greater likelihood of a child dying before the age of 18 if he or she is poor, than if a child is not poor.

If we were to successfully reduce the death rate of poor children to that of non-poor children, there would be 10,000 fewer deaths of children a year in the United States. Educated guesses say of the 70,000 deaths that occur each year, fully half are preventable. Fully half. That's 35,000 deaths of children a year. Contrast that with AIDS deaths, Americans killed in Vietnam, or toxic shock syndrome deaths, and what you see is many, many more deaths of children and a subject that is very, very lightly reported by the press.

The Federal Government has done very little work in this area, and the press has tended not to hold elected officials accountable on these issues. Congress passed a bill in December of 1988 called Public Law 100-543, Section 106. And what that law did, which was signed by President Reagan in January of 1989, it created a national commission on child and youth deaths. And it appointed 15 people, of which I am one, whose job it was to examine the pattern of mortality in the United States among children. A worthwhile topic, one would suspect. However, since the commission was passed by law, some 85,000 children have died in the U.S. You know how many times the commission has met since it was passed into law and signed by the President? Zero.

In a few cases, the press have done a tremendous job in promoting the issue. In Michigan there was tremendous resistance to doing something about this, due to budget restraints. But because of the very aggressive work of the *Detroit Free Press* and their rival, the *Detroit News*, who put it on the front page of the papers for a long time and demanded a response from state government, about a 20 million dollar down payment in this direction has been made in Michigan. In Maine the Legislature appropriated many millions of dollars to deal with these issues and within a three year period, we saw the overall mortality rates among children decline by ten percent.

There's one thing all politicians hate and that's adverse publicity, especially if that adverse publicity is connected with children. And if one were to take any one of these children that we're talking about, and put them on the front page of the newspaper and say, "Governor so and so, what did you do today to prevent this unnecessary death from occurring again?", it wouldn't take many days for something to get done.

Larry Culpepper, Michael Petit

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SEEKING SOLUTIONS: A DIALOGUE

SPEAKERS:

Harold Howe, Senior Lecturer Emeritus, Harvard Graduate School of Education;
Josephine Jackson, Director, Child Inc./Head Start;
Jonathan Kozol, Lecturer and Author;
Joan Lipsitz, Program Director for Education, The Lilly Endowment;
Deborah Meier, Principal, Central Park East Secondary School, New York; MacArthur Foundation Fellow;
Peter Peterson, Chairman, The Blackstone Group; former U.S. Secretary of Commerce;
Karen Johnson Pittman, Director, Educational Improvement/Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention, Children's Defense Fund;
Lisbeth Schorr, Lecturer in Social Medicine, Harvard University;
Sargent Shriver, Chairman of the Board, Special Olympics International; Founder, Head Start;
Jule Sugarman, Executive Director, Special Olympics International, first Director, Head Start;
Aletha Wright, Project Specialist, Office of Child Care Development, New Jersey Division of Youth & Family Services.

During Symposium III, the participants discussed and debated what are the best ways to go about solving the problems facing kids in the '90's. They agreed on many issues — the importance of involving the family in any solution, for example. On others — such as whether or not to seek allies in the business community — they differed strongly. The issues ranged from the general approach to be taken, to the nitty gritty of funding. What follows is a record of this important dialogue, in which the speakers outline the strategies that they feel hold out the best hope for kids.

WHAT SHOULD A PROGRAM LOOK LIKE?

LISBETH SCHORR:

I would really like to begin by addressing the question that Jonathan Kozol raised earlier: how come we have these terrific meetings where we define the problem, we agree there are solutions, and then nothing really changes? How might the story be changed so that next time we get together we will be saying, wow, the dropout rate has gone down, the rate of unmarried teen pregnancy has dropped, the rate of homelessness has dropped. What would have to happen?

I agree with Jonathan that we lack political will. But I think that we lack one other thing as well, and that is we lack some agreement on the strategies that would bring about a change. If we can devise those strategies, and state them clearly and with some degree of unanimity, then I think we have a much better chance of prying loose some of that money, of mobilizing the political will.

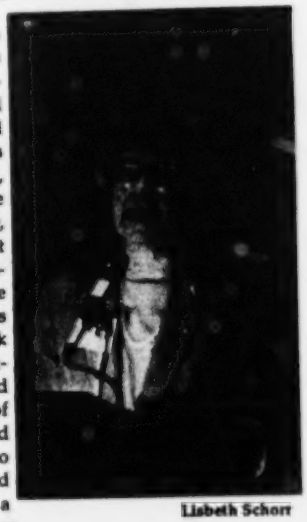
There are a number of successful programs providing services to disadvantaged youth and their families. Programs like Head Start, which serves over 11 million kids. The challenge is to extend help to the many millions more who are not being reached.

A lot of politicians, and even a lot of program people, would like to have a model program that they could just copy and get guaranteed results. This is not possible. Each community has such different circumstances that they each need to build their own customized program based on local needs and resources.

What it is possible to do is to identify the elements which make the programs that are working now successful, and to try and use that in coming up with solutions elsewhere. Here is a list of the things I have found to be most important in running a successful program.

A good program must:

● Be intensive and comprehensive. This attitude is rare, and very hard to maintain in a large organization, but it seems to be essential to being successful with very disadvantaged populations.



Lisbeth Schorr

● Deal with children as part of families, and families as part of communities. I visited a health center in rural Mississippi. When they found that they were seeing kids with recurrent diarrhea, instead of just treating the baby on the examining table, they tried to figure out what was going on. Does this family need a public health nurse or a social worker? Why does this kid keep coming back with diarrhea and dehydration? Well, what they found was that there were a lot of families in that area who had no access to clean water. So they went out and delivered clean water in barrels. It's a way of taking off the blinders. You see beyond the examining table, and into the community.

● Establish an atmosphere of respect. Clients, parents, and children must be full partners in a collaboration for their personal success, and the success of their community.

● Remain flexible. The best programs all seem to be in a

continuing state of change, which again argues against the model that you can clone. The school-based health clinics are really interesting examples. A lot of school-based health clinics were started by people who were concerned about high school kids not having access to family planning services. They found that they could get a lot more support from the community, from the kids, and from the parents if they offered a wide range of services. They wanted to provide a sort of protective covering to the things that were more personal and that people didn't want to have known about in their lives, so they started giving football physicals and camp physicals. They found that there were a lot of unmet physical health needs that nobody knew anything about. They were able to add to what they were doing. They built from there.

These seem to be the essential elements of a good program: cohesiveness, flexibility, respect, and a broad perspective.

RETHINKING OUR GOALS

KAREN JOHNSON PITTMAN:

The best way to develop youth is not to see them as a host of problems, but to actually see them as people worthy of being developed.

What we are doing is sticking kids in programs that are designed to prevent problems. We either target problems one by one — we want you to go to your AIDS prevention class at noon, your pregnancy prevention class at one, remedial reading at three, and then during the summer we want you to go to a gang prevention program — or we lump the programs together and either hire a case manager to get a kid into all of the individual problem programs, or we put together some comprehensive programs that have everything under one roof, a kind of one stop shopping approach. In either case we are fundamentally missing the mark.

Karen Johnson Pittman

We shouldn't be focusing on problem prevention at all. These young people are here not because they have problems, but because they have potential. We need to show kids that we care about their dreams and passions and needs.We need to say to them: we are going to find out what it is that you do well, what you like to do, and we are going to build around that. You may have some holes, you may have some deficits, you may even have some problems that we can help you to fix, but the first thing we are going to do is to get to know you as a young person who has a place you want to go, and we're going to get you there.

NEW APPROACHES TO EDUCATION

DEBORAH MEIER:

I think those of us who work in schools find that if your work isn't interesting, then you're not very good. Keeping schools intellectually lively, interesting places for adults to work in is critical in making them lively places for young people to work in. Kids need to be in a school where they see adults playing with ideas, indeed arguing about ideas, in front of kids.

At Central Park East, teachers design the curriculum in teams. The debate about what to teach and how to teach it is never ending, never settled. People who teach seventh and eighth grade humanities (history and literature), plan a year together. That plan is defended before your colleagues, students' parents and the state. Teachers write what we call curriculum orders in which they describe what they're teaching about, how they're teaching it, and what kinds of things are happening in their room.

Each year we ask whether we did as much as we could. "No," we always say. We ask what else could we have done? How else could we have put this together? What didn't work? What kind of discussions did we have? And we want kids to hear that discussion. They are invited to staff meetings where we argue about it. How we figure out what to teach is an important part of the curriculum and you want to help kids know how to make these sorts of decisions.

SARGENT SHRIVER:

Better pay ought to attract people with a greater motivation to go into teaching and enable them to stay in teaching because they're getting enough salary to support themselves and a family. Secondly, I think we need to have periodic re-examinations of teachers, not just for their teaching qualifications and knowledge of their subject, but for their participation in the life of the school. This is so someone doesn't end up ten years after they start teaching just teaching mathematics and not caring about anything except mathematics. They have to take a broader interest in the school and the people in it than simply the subject they're teaching.

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION: TEACHING HOW TO EMPATHIZE

DEBORAH MEIER:

The most fundamentally important task of educators is to help young people imagine themselves as others. This is why I'm utterly for a multicultural curriculum. On the other hand, I have a feeling it's going to end up like all the other mandates in which we're going to have everybody learning little snippets about everybody else's culture and nobody learning the point of it all which is to learn to think in terms of others.

I think one of the terrible dilemmas for whites in our society is that it is inconceivable that we are other. We don't think of ourselves as whites even. A black friend would ask me if, as a white person, I think such and such? I'd say that I don't think as a white person. I just think as a person. And I now realize the degree to which that is an odd statement, the degree to which I can't imagine what it is to be in a world in which I'm other.

My dilemma is I want whatever I think schools have to tackle that inability to imagine being other. There are many ways of tackling it. I don't think the best way is to mandate

that we all teach everybody about all the others. But curriculum needs to prepare you to be able to demonstrate when you graduate that you can think from a variety of other perspectives, from other people's shoes. The capacity to take up a viewpoint that is different from your own as well as to understand your own, to see where others came from, how they came from there and what the problems are in their viewpoints. Those are what I call critical habits of mind.

What's crucial is being able to hear for a moment, when you study a textbook, the degree to which that textbook presumes, for example, a European stance, even though it doesn't say it. Because I've seen curriculums about Native American culture, on the assumption that we should appreciate Native American culture. Don't you hear the "we"? In other words, it presumes already who's a we and who's a they. That's what I want kids to become more sensitive to. As they look at the literature, they need to ask who do you think wrote that? Where were they standing when they wrote that? Who do you think their audience was? What are the language clues that tell you who was speaking and who they were speaking to? Who have they left out? Can you see the clues in the work you're reading to the set of prejudices surrounding it? That I think is important.

Deborah Meier

TWO ENEMIES: TEXTBOOKS & STANDARDIZED TESTS

DEBORAH MEIER:

People want to revolutionize education but resist getting rid of things like textbooks. I think textbooks are a very bizarre way to teach people. Look at the language of the textbook. It's language that you would design when you have a captive audience. Nobody would write that way if they had to write for a real audience. It does enormous damage. It's a lousy model of writing. It is essentially disrespectful to literacy. I don't get a lot of chances to make students read things so every time I get them to read something, I want it to be worth reading for its style and for what it tells people about the passion that goes into ideas. A textbook is like a bad encyclopedia. You go to it when you need to for something short, but it's not the place to read. It's a crime not to give kids the very best kind of things to read. It's less important whether I agree with the things they're reading. I want to provoke them, to make them think.

Another goal is to find student assessments that we genuinely respect. For example, I think drivers tests would be bad if we put drivers on the road because they answered a multiple choice test. The alternative to that is a very slow process of each one of us having to go out on the road with a driver. I think if kids' minds were as important to us as our driving cars, we would assume we need to have road tests, not simply standardized tests.

At Central Park East, our way of assessing work is to have 40 minute meetings twice a year that are mandatory in which the student, with the support of their advisor, presents their work to their parents and tries to defend what they did in school. This prevents a school versus family dynamic. The student tries to persuade us that they have done a decent trimester's work. It's a more time consuming way of evaluating, but it's more connected with the school and gets parents involved with their kids.

REMEMBER THE FAMILY REMEMBER THE COMMUNITY

ALETHA WRIGHT:

True empowerment is not you doing for me, but in fact me learning to do for myself. And that empowerment, I think, is something that we fear. We say that we really care about children, and I believe that many of us do. But how much do we care about children? Enough to allow their families to empower themselves?

I strongly believe that there must be a peer focus to planning of services. I'm talking about peer leadership programs. Welfare recipients, groups of people who are going into the work force, students, parents — all these people must be allowed to provide input as to the planning of these programs. More importantly, clients and participants and students must be allowed to give feedback as to whether a program is working or not.

JOSEPHINE JACKSON:

One reason why Head Start has been so successful is that it includes the family in the process. Within the policy of Head Start, there is the requirement that parents must be involved in all aspects of the program's operation. No decision can be made really without the involvement of the parent. In many instances this is the first time ever that a parent's thoughts and ideas were considered in deciding such things as the hiring and firing of staff, where to locate a center, and what the budget was going to be like.

The fact that parents are allowed to participate helps them to see and understand the role that they should be playing in their child's life. This carries beyond the Head Start years and results in parents being more involved in the child's school.

In Head Start, parents are respected. They are made to understand and know that this is a partnership, and that we can't do it without them. We are not crutches for parents. Once they are able to see that they are important and that they can do it; once they feel that they are respected for what they think, then they begin to build the self assurance which is the first step in saying to themselves: I am somebody.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

KAREN JOHNSON PITTMAN:

There is a real danger when we talk about 'at risk' kids, of arriving at the well-meaning, but absolutely false conclusion that the only way to save these young people is to remove them from the environment that is putting them at risk.

I sat on a very prestigious task force a couple of months ago that was putting out a report on minority education. In the middle of the discussion I had to get up and leave. I had to get up and leave because we were discussing at what age it was appropriate to recommend that we take young people away from their families.

The recommendation had already been put out at age 12, when the kids go on to secondary school, the idea being that that is a good time to pick up these high risk kids in high risk environments and put them in a more positive setting. Then someone suggested that perhaps we had set our age too late. Maybe we should back up and talk about maybe removing seven- or eight-year-olds.

I had to stand up and say, "Since when is it alright to sit around a table and decide that we should remove young people at any age from their families and their communities?"

When we talk about all black kids in all black schools where everybody is doing poorly in very low income neighborhoods, where nobody has a job, etc., we arrive at a solution that says that all we have to do is put those kids on buses and send them 20 miles away and that will save them. It won't work.

We say that we are not blaming the young people. We say that we are telling them that it's not their fault. But really we are blaming them. Not only are we blaming them, but we are blaming their families. We are blaming their communities. We are missing a very important opportunity to do multiple good. Young people, whether we like it or not, are part of families, are part of communities. We must take an approach that strengthens the family and strengthens the community rather than one which blames them.

HAROLD HOWE:

The state of Missouri has done some interesting things to help families to be better families. The school authorities in Missouri ran a trial project in the early 80's in a few school districts in which the parents were helped to learn more about how to help their kids succeed in school. And it worked. The kids of those parents, after three years, started to attend school more regularly, started to do better in terms of testing. And now Missouri is saying to every school district, if you want to start a program to help parents support their kids, we'll pay for it. That's the kind of thing we need.

A QUESTION OF FUNDING

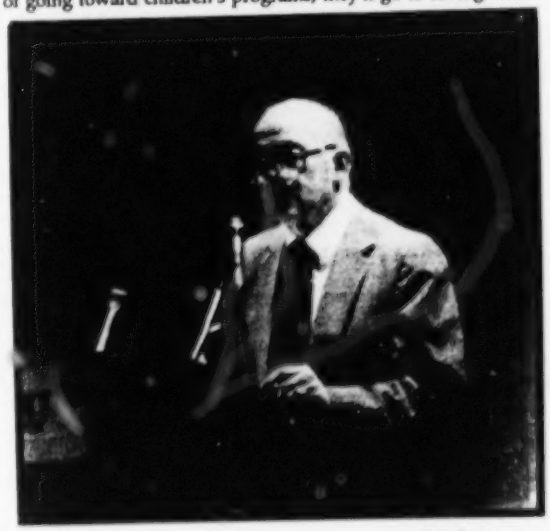
LISBETH SCHORR:

To do one of these programs locally, or to run one of these schools, you have to be not only a Saint Francis and a Mother Teresa, you also have to be a Machiavelli and a certified public accountant. Now it shouldn't be all that hard. So part of the strategy has to be to get the myriad of fragmented sources of funds together so that people who are doing the Lord's work at a local level can do so without having to put so much into it that they burn out within a matter of months.

I think that we are going to see some really exciting strategies coming out in terms of the way these programs are funded. I think that we are going to see some experimentation with something I call a flexible superfund. That's where you put money from many different sources together, and by changing regulations, by making agreements across health and welfare and education, you put the money together and make it easier to use to support coherent services in the neighborhood.

JULE SUGARMAN:

What I've been trying to do in the last two years is to put together a piece of legislation which would substantially increase the availability of money for financing children's programs. This concept is called the Children's Investment Trust. There's a lot of fear out there that if taxes are increased, instead of going toward children's programs, they'll go to savings and



Jule Sugarman

loan bail outs or whatever tomorrow's public policy may be, and children will end up down at the bottom end of the line.

Because there needs to be something to insure that in fact the money would go where it ought to go, I've proposed a very specific tax, a progressive payroll tax. It doesn't apply to people who make less than $5 an hour. It does double when you get to an annual income of $51,000 or higher, so that instead of the normal rate which is 3/10 of a percent, it goes to 6/10 of a percent. It requires that businesses pay half of that expense. To oversimplify, by 1995, this tax produces about 23 billion dollars a year against your base of 40 billion dollars, so it's a major increase in terms of availability of money. One important change that it makes is to say that half of this money will go directly to state and local governments for their decisions about how the money ought to be used.

This legislation has to overcome the President's view and many members of Congress' view that we cannot afford taxes. We are a very undertaxed nation in terms of what we require in this country as compared to the other industrial nations. I'd say that about 10% of the Congressional staff are willing to talk about this and think seriously about it, so we very much have an uphill battle. But a lot of things have changed in this country because the public was ahead of the leaders, and that's what I hope will happen here.

PETER PETERSON:

If you watch how Washington is approaching problems today, it's a little bit like one of those Restoration comedies, you know, like the French farces that some of you have read. People

walk on stage, they wink at each other, they whisper and they all know in their hearts that they're fooling the American people.

Today, the burning issue on television was flag burning. That was the dominant issue in the Presidential campaign. Regardless of how you feel about flag burning, you notice that it has something very important that defines it. It's a marvelous diversionary tactic. It takes our attention off the tough question which is what am I willing to give up and who is going to pay. So we're happy to engage in this fiscal farce that I'm referring to.

The obvious question is where has the money been going? The answer is to entitlements which basically go to the elderly. If you total all the kids' programs and all the elderly's programs, 11 times as much goes to the elderly as goes to our children. Do you realize that next year (I'm 64) I'll be getting back something like three or four times what I put into Social Security, plus interest, a lot of it tax free? Do you realize that regarding Medicare, I'll be getting five to ten times as much as I've put in? Again, tax free. And that's at a time when we have a poverty rate among children that is six times as high as it is among the elderly.

Until this country faces the issue of entitlements in America, which is where the money has been going, we're going to have an awful time finding the money for children. If you reduced the cost of living increase to 60% of the inflation increase —not to the poor, let the poor get 100% — by the end of the decade that would produce something like $90-$100 billion a year.

Why is this going on? Well, it's going on largely for political reasons. There's a group called the American Association of Retired Persons, the AARP. Next to the Catholic church, this is the largest organization in America. They vote more, they write letters more and they create an avalanche in Washington with the most minor change in the so-called entitlement programs. So the problem is overwhelmingly political.

The current projections by the retired chief actuary of the Social Security administration — he can make these comments now, he couldn't make them while he was in the Social Security administration — is that you kids will, when you join the work force, be paying somewhere between 20% and 40% of your payroll to support these programs. That's going to be morally impossible, politically impossible and economically impossible, but it's going to mean damn little money for the kids, in any event. So let me urge you to start getting into politics, and maybe instead of the AARP, American Association of Retired Persons, maybe we need a new organization: an American Association for Young Persons. But unless the politics of this thing changes, I'm afraid we're going to see the French farces we're now seeing in Washington today.

WHAT ROLE FOR BUSINESS?

LISBETH SCHORR:

I believe that things are changing, that we have a much stronger coalition working for action on children's issues. The people who are moved by compassion have been joined by the people who are moved by self-interest.

The people who only understand profit margins, and who only care about competing successfully with Japan, finally understand that they can't do it without an educated work force. They understand that you can't get an educated work force from the schools we have today. They understand that you can't get a good start in school unless you have pre-natal care; unless you have early health care; unless you have good nutrition.

So I think now that when you see the Committee for Economic Development sounding very much like the Children's Defense Fund, then you know something is happening in this country.

JONATHAN KOZOL:

I hear a lot nowadays about this idea that business partners will come in and help us solve these problems. It's one of the trendiest ideas, for example, in the public school discussion these days. And I'll tell you how I see it basically. Basically I see it as being a very bad idea.

What you have in major cities are large corporations whose executives, for the most part, live in white segregated suburbs. These same people are generally part of the forces that lobby against equalization of funding between rich and poor school districts. But then they form these business councils and commissions and they issue reports, which get great coverage from the newspapers, in which they propose, basically, ways to restructure the ghetto. That's basically how I see the agenda. They profit from injustice and then pose as allies of the poor people from whom they have removed themselves.

Let me give some examples of what I think results. First of all, corporate leaders who are presenting themselves as partners to the poor people in the cities almost consciously are trying to substitute corporate charity for government justice. There is a very clear trade off. In the Reagan years it was almost understood that they would get tax cuts if they would hold corporate luncheons, and form partnerships, and offer larger crumbs to the poor urban schools. So one reason I find it obnoxious is because it is an explicit way of substituting a small amount of charity for a great deal of justice.

The second reason I find it dangerous is because it is inherently ephemeral. Corporate leaders, one or two every few years, get excited about one of these problems. Some of them are pretty good guys, like David Kearns of Xerox and so forth. They'll get on the bandwagon. They'll give a few speeches. They'll get invited to the White House. They'll go on Public Television. They'll issue a report and then drop the issue because they switch gears and the corporate priority is now something else. The corporation that decides to do something voluntarily for the poor can just as easily decide not to.

A third reason that I find this a dangerous direction is that when business moves into providing social services, they bring their own values to bear.

JOAN LIPSITZ:

I think that instead of bashing the business community, it would be a very good idea to invite them, to welcome them, to say to them that we are glad to have you as part of this continuing process of revelation. I think we need as many allies on behalf of children as we can possibly have.

JONATHAN KOZOL:

I spent 25 years trying to find allies wherever I could get them. For example, on the literacy issue, I was leading a large struggle on that for five years, and I probably had lunch and dinner with every major CEO in the country. I would talk to any business group that would listen.

To a certain degree I think it is worth doing. If you are talking to people who are really willing to be consistent and absolutely sincere in what they are offering, and if they will create something that is permanent and cannot be reversed by the whim of the next CEO, then I think it may be worth it. But in cases where it is obvious to me that the so-called business partner has no real agenda, except to provide cosmetic charitable coverup for a basically reactionary agenda, then I believe that it is destructive to the interest of children to cooperate with a person of that sort. You are simply adding window dressing to something that is phony.

CHILDREN'S EXPRESS 15TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER

1989-1990 JOURNALISM AWARDS

Children's Express celebrated its 15th anniversary with a benefit dinner on June 11, 1990 honoring Sargent Shriver on the 25th anniversary of the founding of Head Start. Dinner co-chairs were Bill Moyers and Judy Woodruff.

Sargent Shriver was honored for his extraordinary lifetime service to children and youth, including: Head Start, Peace Corps, Neighborhood Job Corps, VISTA, Foster Grandparents, Indian and Migrant Opportunity, Community Action, Legal Services for the Poor, Neighborhood Health Services, Special Olympics International, Chicago Board of Education.

Children's Express also presented its 1990 and 1989 journalism awards which recognize outstanding reporting of a series of articles on Children in Trouble.

HONOREES 1990:

1ST PLACE $1,000
G. Wayne Miller for the *Providence Journal-Bulletin* series,
"Children of Poverty."

2ND PLACE $250
Mary Hargrove for *The Tulsa Tribune* series,
"Oklahoma Children: A State of Neglect."

3RD PLACE
Diana Dawson for the *Spokane Spokesman-Review and Chronicle* series,
"When Mom Uses Cocaine."

HONOREES 1989:

1ST PLACE $1,000
Diana Dawson and Russell Carollo for the *Spokane Spokesman-Review and Chronicle* series,
"Trust Betrayed."

RUNNER-UP $250
Mike Hudson for the *Roanoke Times & World-News* series,
"Cracks in the System: Juvenile Justice in Virginia."

ENTRIES FOR THE 1992 JOURNALISM AWARD MUST BE RECEIVED AT CHILDREN'S EXPRESS BY FEBRUARY 15, 1992.

Sargent Shriver accepting a lifetime award for his service to children.

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ABOUT CHILDREN'S EXPRESS

Children's Express (CE), founded in 1975, is a non-profit, international news service reported by children and teenagers. CE operates news bureaus in New York City, Newark, Boston, Indianapolis, San Francisco Bay Area, Atlanta, Australia and New Zealand, run by reporters ages 8-13 and editors ages 14-18. Its news teams have travelled on assignment to Hiroshima, Chernobyl, Israel, Cambodia and Zambia, and have covered every Presidential convention since 1976. In 1989, CE won Peabody and Emmy awards for its coverage of the 1988 Conventions on the PBS television show, "Children's Express News Magazine"; in 1981, it was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. CE journalists have interviewed Presidents, Vice Presidents, Senators, Governors, Prime Ministers and a retired Supreme Court Justice. Children's Express challenges common perceptions about children, enabling them to be seen, and to see themselves, as people capable of important ideas and concerns. Currently, CE produces a syndicated news service and a *Quarterly* of news and other writing by kids. The Indianapolis Bureau produces a full page of news each Monday for *The Indianapolis Star*.

CHILDREN'S EXPRESS
U.S. fails to OK kids' right
CHILDREN'S EXPRESS
Arab teens speak out as world views Mideast
Islam not just a religion, but a way of life

Above: Retired Supreme Justice William Brennan with CE reporters and editors in his Washington, D.C. office, September 1990. Since retiring Brennan has granted only one interview...to Children's Express; Top of Page: Children's Express in *The Indianapolis Star*.

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THE PLAIN DEALER

SUNDAY, JUNE 24, 1990

PD graphic/STEVE LITTLE

Urban youth called victims of social ills

By REBECCA FRELIGH
STAFF WRITER

NEW YORK

Writer Jonathan Kozol has been visiting schools lately, and he has some stories to tell — about Chicago classrooms with no teachers, Bronx high-school students without books, East St. Louis school bathrooms without toilet paper. About urban school systems that can spend only half as much per student as suburban systems; about dropout rates of 45%, in contrast to reported figures of 25%.

He calls the whole bleak landscape of urban school life a "panorama of despair."

Kozol's view was one of many somber pictures of contemporary childhood offered recently at a symposium on children's problems and media coverage of them. The two-day symposium at the New York Hilton was sponsored by Children's Express, a news service with children ages 8-13 as reporters, and teen-agers and adults as their editors.

"It shouldn't hurt to be a child in the United States today," insisted New Jersey child-care administrator Aletha Wright. But other speakers agreed with Wright that for many children, the pain is indeed too much to bear, the social consequences potentially devastating.

Experts didn't agree, however, on the roots and solutions of these problems. Keynote speaker Kozol, who has written extensively on education and social justice ("Death at an Early Age"; "Rachel and Her Children"), said the crux of the matter is lack of political will on the part of legislators who represent white, middle-class and affluent interests.

"Nothing is going to change unless we deal with the central defect in American society: that America still values and accepts inequality," Kozol said. "The answer is simple. It is taxes. Anyone who tells you anything else is foolish."

The great untold story of American public schools is that they're still separate and unequal, said Kozol, who began his career as a Boston public-school teacher. In 25 years since, he said, nothing has changed for poor black children.

Kozol

Such inequity begins at birth, noted physician Victor Sidel, a professor of social medicine at Montefiore Medical Center in New York, citing statistics on high infant mortality, poor immunization, and deteriorating health care in certain areas of the United States.

Yet the income gap between rich and poor is wider than ever, he said, adding that only radical tactics will bring about the necessary changes: "People are going to have to march through the streets of this society," Sidel said. "People are going to have to die to get the changes we need."

There are parallels between these "pockets of Third World reality" in the United States and Third World countries, according to Atherton Martin, a U.S. policy analyst in the Caribbean. Despite the flow of U.S. money into developing countries, Martin said, he meets astonishingly poor people — like a little Brazilian girl whose diet included mud cakes made with newspapers.

"If it hasn't worked for you with your wealth and your technology, how is it going to work in countries of no wealth?" Martin asked. "A small number of people in the world are pursuing happiness at the expense of other people's lives and liberties."

On the other hand, children are asked to fight in — and bear the consquences of — adult conflicts worldwide. According to Dennis Nurkse of Defense for Children International-U.S.A., 5% of World War I deaths were women and children, while in post-World War II wars, women and noncombatant children accounted for 90% of the deaths.

Last fall, Nurkse said, both the United States and the Soviet Union opposed an attempt to raise from 15 to 18 the minimum draft age in the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child.

"There is a way we use children to solve military problems," Nurkse said. "Maybe it speaks to a relationship of who we are as adults and children."

To be sure, it was acknowledged, some social programs have achieved a measure of success, such as Head Start, whose success was hailed repeatedly during the two-day symposium. These programs can serve as models for others, experts said.

Moreover, some recent developments may favor children's interests, noted writer-activist Lisabeth Schorr. Stronger coalitions exist today, Schorr said, including corporations which realize the need for an educated work force; in addition, defense-budget cuts may free federal funds.

"This year for the first time, we have a chance of getting the peace dividend," Schorr said. "Let's get our hands on that money!"

As children become adolescents, new prob lems arise, leaving some to seek solutions in edu cational reform, said Harold Howe, a former U.S education commissioner. In fact, Howe saic most education takes place in the family an community, not in the school; reformers need t consider the three settings together.

A further problem — one not limited to ecc nomic class — is a perceptual one, Howe saic Adults view adolescents as a problem group, an youth know it.

"Most of the kids in this country are not i trouble," Howe said. "Yet, we continue to thin of young people in this country as people wh are problems, and who have problems."

But Joan Lipsitz, an expert on ear adolescence, questioned whether poverty an racism have so unraveled the urban social fabr that conventional knowledge of these youth n longer applies.

"What does chronological age mean for thes kids," asked Lipsitz, "when you're making $5,0(a week selling drugs?"

The symposium's most hopeful note was th presence of 45 members of the Children's E press news team, editors in red T-shirts, repor ers in yellow. Their credentials were impressiv — several have reported on political conventior and overseas events — and their insistent, pro ing questions took many a speaker aback.

As for adult media coverage of children, son organizations have assumed an active educ tional role. "For Kids' Sake," a recent nation public-service campaign by Group W Televisio aimed to change misperceptions of yout according to Nance Guilmartin, Group W's pu lic-affairs director. The campaign led to par nerships between TV stations, businesses ar other community groups to address issues suc as drugs, pregnancy and literacy.

Group W also heard some strong opinions fro youth: Namely, they wanted media to stop glan orizing violence; they wanted to be asked the opinions, and to be given a voice. "We're clos to the problems," a young woman from Harle told Guilmartin. "Don't you think we're closer t the solutions?"

The media have a "moral imperative" to cov global environmental issues and how they affe children, according to Barbara Pyle, vice-pres dent of environmental policy for Super Static TBS, who unabashedly stated, "I'm not a journa ist. I have a point of view." In September th station will debut a new cartoon series, "Capta Planet and the Planeteers," aimed at teachir kids environmental responsibility.

"We (the media) are the new educators on thi planet," Pyle declared.

Other solutions aim for an economic impact o children; for example, a Children's Trust pro posed by former Head Start director Jul Sugarman, to be funded by a progressive payrol tax.

One trend is the business-school partnership which Kozol, for one, views as a whitewashin public-relations strategy by elitist, suburban dwelling executives.

"If I had to choose between a phony alliance and going back to the streets," he said, "I woulc rather go that way."

Lipsitz disagreed. "We need all the help w can get," she said.

Former U.S. Commerce Secretary Peter G. Pe terson warned that until the nation revises enti tlement spending — which goes largely to well off retirees, not to the poor, he said — there wil not be enough money for children's programs.

"Currently, 11 times as much governmen money goes to the elderly as goes to children, Peterson said.

Policy analyst Martin cautioned that repeatec cutting off of "the bottom" of society — that is children and the poor — will, as in nature, only result in death and decay for all.

"I don't think you can find anything in nature that grows from the top down," he said. "Neve forget: It is roots that give life to the branches."

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"In a media-intensive society, Children's Express is a great way to interest young people in how news is made and how, as adults, they can become wiser consumers of that news."

—Louis Boccardi, President, Associated Press

"I think it's the number one promotion and readership idea for the future of newspapers."

—Otto Silha,
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Minneapolis *Star Tribune*

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